

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this manual is to provide a resource for those involved in handling emergencies and disasters. The content of the manual is limited to information needed during emergency and disaster response and recovery phases. Montana Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) compiled the information taking advantage of assistance from local government DES Coordinators with extensive emergency and disaster experience.

Two items stand above all else in the order of importance for successfully handling emergencies and disasters; We offer you the following suggestions:

1. At the onset of an emergency or disaster, immediately begin keeping records of expenses incurred and actions taken (manpower used, equipment dispatched, hours worked, etc.). Detailed records are absolutely essential for audit purposes and if expenses are to be recouped.
2. If in doubt about whether or not to declare an emergency or disaster, do it; (Tab F describes the legal difference between an emergency or a disaster). A disaster declaration has the effect of activating your Emergency Operations Plan.

This manual in digital form can be a very useful guide to you during emergencies and disasters. Most of the forms included in this manual are available in multiple formats, Adobe PDF and Microsoft Excel and Word. The reasoning behind this is fairly simple. PDF files are universally accepted for viewing and the Adobe Reader is free to download via the internet. Microsoft Word and Excel files allow the user to use the interactive forms if they have the Microsoft Office software available.

There are two ways to use and save the forms. PDF forms are not interactive so they need to be printed and filled in by hand. The Microsoft products however can be filled out when opened and then saved and printed, or opened, saved and then filled at a later date.

Our intentions are to keep an updated version of the LGDIM on the MT DES Website (examples – 2 mil levies, FEMA forms). Web-based updates will be more timely and cost effective than printing hard copy updates. The web-based LGDIM is formatted identically to the CD version and can be opened and saved. An executable Win-Zip folder will also be available to download which will have the entire LGDIM in one package that can be downloaded and saved either to your computer hard drive or saved on a CD or DVD.

The current manual is approximately 20 Megs total and may be time consuming to download with a dial-up internet access. If you are experiencing problems, please contact your DES District Representative or the MTDES Office in Helena. We will be glad to help you in any way we can. We also welcome any suggestions you may have for improvement of this manual.